

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



FACULTY ARTISTS SERIES

PROGRAM III

WALTER HALL

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 1981

8 P.M.

PROGRAM

Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

MARY MORRISON - Narrator; DAVID ZAFER, violin & viola;
NORA SHULMAN, flute & piccolo; JAMES CAMPBELL, clarinet;
DAVID BOURQUE, bass clarinet; DAVID HETHERINGTON, cello;
WILLIAM AIDE, piano; VICTOR FELDBRILL, conductor.

Pierrot Lunaire was composed between March 30 and September 9, 1912. It is the penultimate work before an eight-year hiatus during which Schoenberg completed no new compositions, but formulated his theory of twelve-tone composition. Pierrot is the ne plus ultra of Schoenberg's atonal period and one of the seminal works of the 20th century. The original is a setting of 21 ("three-times-seven") poems by Albert Giraud, translated from French into German, for reciter and a chamber ensemble of five players: piano, flute doubling on piccolo, clarinet doubling on bass clarinet, violin doubling on viola, and cello. The voice part is written for the most part in Sprechgesang, a type of declamation which, as Schoenberg warns in the preface, should sound neither like singing nor like speech but rather like something in between the two. At times the voice is also instructed to whisper, hiss or sing, and such affective directions as "plaintive", "seriously", "excitedly" and "exasperated" are often used. Such new means of expression for the voice have been more fully explored by many composers since. The 21 songs or miniature melodramas that make up Pierrot take just over half an hour to perform, lasting from half a minute to just over two minutes each. The instrumentation of each is different, ranging from "Der kranke Mond" (No. 7) which is accompanied by solo flute, through various combinations of two, three, four or five of the eight instruments available. This fascination for chamber music, and especially chamber music employing unusual combinations of instruments (eg. piccolo, viola and cello) was also to become a preoccupation of later composers. But certain aspects of Pierrot relate to earlier music also, for example the numerous passages of complex contrapuntal writing such as "Nacht" (No. 8), which is a passacaglia, or the canons in "Parodie" (No. 17) and "Der Mondfleck" (No. 18). In addition may be mentioned "Valse de Chopin" (No. 5) and "Heimfahrt" (No. 20) which is labelled "Barcarole", both of which are parodies, whether intentional or not.

The theatrical element was an important aspect of the original conception of Pierrot: at the first performance in Berlin, the instrumentalists were hidden from view while the reciter appeared alone in costume on a darkened stage. The success of Pierrot, though accompanied by the usual controversy surrounding any of Schoenberg's works, was immediate and lasting.

INTERMISSION

Quartet for flute and strings in D Major, K. 285

W. A. MOZART

Allegro

Adagio

Rondo

JEAN BAXTRESSER, flute; ANDREW DAWES, violin; TERENCE HELMER, viola; DENIS BROTT, cello

Mozart wrote three quartets for flute and strings, K. 285, K. 285a, and K. 298. The first two were written in Mannheim and the third was written in Paris. These three works together with the two flute concertos were written within the space of half a year. The present work was completed on Christmas Day, 1777. Mozart had obtained a leave from the Salzburg court the previous summer and was touring Europe with his mother in the hopes of finding a better appointment. The two came to Mannheim on October 30, 1777 and stayed until the spring of 1778. Under the Elector Karl Theodor, the Mannheim court possessed a musical establishment which was renowned throughout Europe, especially for its excellent orchestra. Here Mozart made the acquaintance of J. B. Wendling, a flutist and composer who may have inspired the sudden rash of works for flute, which was otherwise one of Mozart's least favorite instruments. The D major quartet is a tuneful work in Mozart's lightest style, with the melodic interest centred on the flute. The first movement is in sonata allegro form. The slow movement is an aria for flute accompanied by pizzicato strings and leads without break into the concluding rondo.

String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 13

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Adagio--Allegro vivace

Adagio no lento

Intermezzo: Allegro con moto--Allegro di molto

Presto

ORFORD STRING QUARTET: (Andrew Dawes, Kenneth Perkins, violins;
Terence Helmer, viola; Denis Brott, cello)

It is certainly a measure of the native talent of the 18-year-old Mendelssohn that he could produce in his A minor quartet such a worthy veneration of Beethoven's style in general, and in particular of the great A minor quartet Op. 132, only a few years after this latter work was written and indeed in the very year that it was first published - 1827. This is all the more noteworthy when one considers the general neglect and incomprehension of the late Beethoven quartets in the 19th century. Mendelssohn framed his A minor quartet with a quotation of one of his songs, "Ist es wahr", which was written just before the quartet and serves both as a slow introduction to the first movement and as a coda to the final movement. The principal subject of the first movement bears an unmistakable resemblance to the corresponding subject in Beethoven's Op. 132, both rhythmically and melodically. The Adagio, after a short introduction, launches into a fugue, after which the introduction returns together with the fugue subject to serve as a coda. The third movement is in ABA form, but in spirit an ambling Intermezzo rather than a Scherzo. The finale is preceded by a recitative-like passage for first violin, as is the finale of Beethoven's Op. 132. The above-mentioned song closes the quartet on a peaceful note.

- Notes by Robin Elliott

Next Concert: Great Singers Series #1, Maureen Forrester
Sunday, January 18, 1981, 8 pm, MacMillan Theatre

Next Faculty Artists Concert: Saturday, February 28, 1981, 8pm
Walter Hall